



The 'Awkward Squad' Returns?

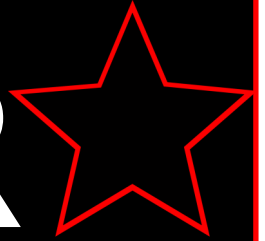


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'FREE-STATE' LABOUR VENTURES NORTH

BLACK STAR



ECUADOR



General Strike Achieves Partial Victory

At the end of June an 18 day general strike ended with major concessions being forced on the government. The demands of the strike included decreased fuel prices, increases to the education and welfare budget, controls on certain goods and an end to the expansion of oil exploration areas. In the face of severe repression the strikers forced the government to concede cuts to fuel prices, limits on the expansion of oil exploration areas, the banning of mining activities in protected areas, national parks and water sources. The government has been given 90 days to deliver.

'Leaders' of the movement, who refused to directly oppose the capitalist government, talk of respect, dialogue and rights. Surprisingly the threat of what is to come if the government do not implement the deal came from mediator Monsignor Luis Cabera, head of the Episcopal Conference, who warned, "if state policies do not resolve the problem of the poor, then the people will rise up". As no state has the will or ability to resolve the problem of the poor we look forward to the inevitable rising, in Ecuador and across the globe.

Meanwhile in Ballymena



The 'beast' was battered and 'Skeletor' won. Not a bad result for young Rhys McKee, though it could equally refer to a bad Saturday night in the toon!

Still, I wish one or both of the Ballymena fighters had been around to punch the fuck out of Paul Frew meeting with Firmus Gas here this week on a charm offensive about 'clean' energy whilst shafting us with a 17 per cent bills hike.

Fuckin' profiteering bastards.

No Surrender To Capitalism



As we march into another summer of worsening economic conditions here, everyone seems to see the answer in a restitution of Stormont. Although often criticised as being overly optimistic about human nature and seen as idealistic, us anarchists cannot subscribe to the unbelievably gullible view that a renewed Northern Ireland assembly will save people from financial hardship, social deprivation and rampant inequality. Some important victories have been won but only by workers and strike action. More need to follow and will because it is only by directly challenging the power of capital that things will change.

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)



Born in Concord in Massachusetts in the United States on 12 July 1817, Henry David Thoreau is often remembered as a naturalist and transcendentalist though he is also thought of as a founding thinker of American anarchism.

His most famous writings celebrate and encourage the practice of civil disobedience. Long a proponent of the idea that the best government is the government that governs not at all, Thoreau wrote:

If a man who has no property refuses but once to earn nine shillings for the state, he is put in prison for a period unlimited by any law that I know, and

determined only by the discretion of those who placed him there; but if he should steal ninety times nine shillings from the state, he is soon permitted to go at large again... Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine.

Irish Labour Party Comes North

At the start of this month, that highlight in the calendar of Irish Labour, the Tom Johnson Summer School (named after a particularly unimaginative former Party chief), took place in Belfast. The event was opened by the SDLP's Matthew O'Toole, began with a panel on the 'greatness' of John Hume. It featured SDLP members and even an Alliance Party member. Climate, the peace process and the 'war of drugs' were the other topics of discussion before the gala dinner and new leader, Ivana Bacik's speech. Not much talk then of workers, strikes, cost of living crisis, or any of that irrelevant pish, but then let's remember SDLP canvassing for votes with all three main Free State parties not that long ago. 'This is what (social) democracy looks like'!

Hasta luego



Workers at Caterpillar in Larne and Interface in Craigavon (pictured below) have returned to work having secured pay increases above the (still rising) rate of inflation with (we're told), no strings attached.

Fair play to them, even if they have to return to the

fight at a later stage. They have laid down a marker here for others to follow, with the posties up next.

Whether 'national' strikes, as the RMT's experience shows, will be reflected with equal success remains to be seen. Certainly, the presence or absence of Stormont had no bearing on the recent workers' victories, it was direct action that made the difference, as usual.

The Return of The 'Awkward Squad'?



and to save the welfare state. Then they put some ambiguously worded motions into the Labour Party conference. Then they withdrew them. Grr! I'm telling you, these boys are fucking animals. They will stop at nothing. And they frequently do."

A number of years ago there was a book called *Is it just me or is everything shit?* which had a section called 'Trade union leaders pretending to be hard' and I was reminded of it recently again watching the media coverage of RMT leader, Mick Lynch (no doubt starring at a Féile an Phobail soon, I'll wager).

Back then, in the dying days of the New Labour government, a new group of more abrasive trade union leaders began to emerge, called the 'awkward squad':

"a bunch of Molotov-hurling desperadoes like Dave 'Knuckles' Prentis of UNISON, Billy 'Haymaker' Hayes of the CWU, and Bob Crow 'bar'... they immediately issued terrible threats to fight for workers' rights

Looks like we're seeing a repeat of all this shite with the adulation from the left being heaped on Lynch and ridiculous talk about the 'return' of militant trade unionism. Next up will be Dave Ward, the CWU boss who replaced the Haymaker in 2015.

People forget it is the ordinary rank and file that make up unions, not these highly paid arseholes.



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Get Involved: Help Build An Anarchist Alternative.



Organise! is an anarchist political group in Ireland who take inspiration from the self directed struggles of working-class people, particularly those organised on anarcho-syndicalist lines. Our history goes back to the original formation of Organise! by the Ballymena and Antrim Anarchist Groups in 1985.

We are a small, but growing, group of ordinary working class people who are fed up with being fucked about by the profit system, fed up with seeing our communities and workplaces torn apart by racism, patriarchy, nationalism and sectarianism, and sick of a greedy few getting rich off everyone else's backs.

We are actively working to promote solidarity in opposition to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression and hierarchy. The way we organise reflects the free society we want to create: one based on voluntary association, democratic participation and self-management.

Our members are workers, claimants, students, migrants, unemployed and other working-class people committed to building a libertarian communist union movement actively opposed to all forms of oppression and exploitation.

We want to improve everyday conditions for ourselves and other working class people, but we also struggle for the revolutionary transformation that can create a free and equal society, one based on mutual aid and co-operation. Sound crazy? Maybe it does, but in an era in which it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism the continuation of the present system is even crazier...



The current system isn't working – ill-health, stress and overwork affect more and more people while others are flung on the dole; for increasing amounts of workers it is precarity, zero hours contracts and the stress of being unable to plan or budget our lives; we live in a world of plentiful resources yet millions starve; some people make vast fortunes just because they own companies, land, property or natural resources, but those of us who create the wealth, work the land and build the properties are left struggling to survive; politicians tell us there's no money – not for wages, benefits or local amenities, but there's always plenty for war; both locally and globally the gap between the richest and the poorest sections of society has never been so great; instead of a war on poverty they've got a war on 'benefit fraud', while the same system that creates war, poverty and environmental destruction stigmatises, imprisons and deports the resultant refugees.

We don't think these things are inevitable or coincidental, we think they are related to capitalism – an economic system defined by wage slavery and the accumulation of profit out of other people's work. So we support all workers against their bosses in demanding higher wages and better conditions. We try to intervene practically to support workers engaged in disputes and are also active in our own workplaces and communities. Not only against exploitation but against the multiple oppressions faced by members of the working class in all our diversity.

But it's not just a question of trying to struggle by in a world of exploitation and oppression; we look to a future where workers control production and society in their own interests. And unlike some people who claim to oppose capitalism, we don't want to be a new set of leaders and we refuse to be led by anyone else. We advocate direct democracy in the workplace and through the commune in our communities – working in federation to ensure that the needs of all are met and that no-one is ever again in a position to oppress or exploit another human being.

If you are interested in these ideas, we'd encourage you to explore our website and consider getting involved.

We currently have members in Belfast, Cork, Derry, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and Portadown and are building the organisation on the basis of active involvement and participation. We aren't interested in meaningless 'paper' membership so you can't join by filling in an online form and bunging us a few quid.

To talk to us about joining get the ball rolling, check out our website at <https://organiseanarchistsireland.com> and send an email to:

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